



Helping Civilian Educators



Understand our military
youth

● Four Key Parts at the School

✱ Administration

- Principals, Support Staff, School Boards or Volunteers.

✱ Teachers/Coaches

✱ School Counselors

- Elementary, Jr. High, High School, College level?

✱ Students

- With Deployed Family and Without

What each group should know.

✱ Educators/Administration

- Educate on military, deployment issues, Guard issues in general.

✱ School Counselors

- Educate on military, deployment issues, Guard issues, and how to meet the emotional needs of our Guard Youth.

✱ Students

- Provide a place where they can receive emotional support and understanding and an outlet for them to express themselves.

● Do not assume what schools know...

- ✱ Many counselors are not aware of the cycle of deployment.
- ✱ Many teachers are not aware of children having parents who are in the guard.
- ✱ Most administrators do not understand what avenues of assistance are there for children.
- ✱ Most students think they are alone in dealing with deployment.

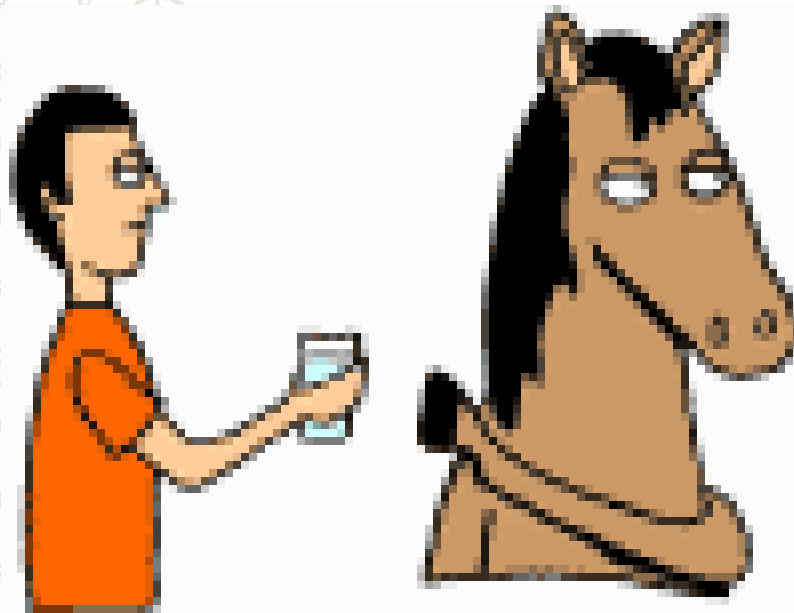
Where to start...

✦ Step one:

- Make contact with schools
 - Phone
 - Postcards
 - Letter
- Most schools will at least want the principal or counselor to visit with you.



No Response



✱ Once you have made the schools aware you exist and you have offered to be of assistance, give them time to take in the information and respond sometimes they are just not interested....you can lead a horse to water.....



Each school is different

- ✖ Some never responded
- ✖ Some began to send letters once a year asking parents about any upcoming deployments they knew about
- ✖ Some schools did a large meeting
- ✖ Some schools implemented a support group
- ✖ Some schools use Family Readiness as a POC

Educate the educators



The South Dakota National Guard's annual Educator Lift gave 26 local teachers and reporters the unique chance to spend a day in the field observing soldiers in a wartime atmosphere.

Stevens High School principal Katie Bray speaks with Sgt. Maj. Roger Niederwerder of Sturgis at the Joint Thunder training site in Custer State Park (Photo by civ Kristen M. Strissel)

Educators Flights, base tours, educator activities during drill weekends. Many opportunities to inform and educate the educators involved in your



Next, go to them...

- ✦ Meet with the administration and inform them of programs that are available.
- ✦ Recommend in-service training for both educators and counselors.
- ✦ Offer ideas of children support groups, activities, or clubs. See if you can find someone who will be your POC for that school.

Administrators

- ✱ Focus on programs for children.
- ✱ Get their support to implement training.
- ✱ Give them the “shortened” version of what you will share with educators and counselors.



Counselors



- ✦ Educate Counselors on the Cycle of Deployment
 - Emotional
 - Tasks
- ✦ Counselors need to understand both the emotions that are being experienced, as well as the extra workload that the family is undertaking.
- ✦ This person will be an excellent POC for programs.

Stages of deployment

✚ Pre-deployment

- Denial, paperwork, exhaustion, arguments.

✚ Deployment

- Relief, alone, sad, sleeping issues, taking over more of the chores.

✚ Sustainment

- Routines are established, independence, confidence, kids know what is expected of them and what to expect.
- (this one is a goal to see families reach, some never do and this support will hopefully allow that.)

✚ Post-deployment

- Reunion, adjusting to each other again, trying to go back to "how it was".

Typical Reactions of Children

✚ Infants

- Fussier, change in sleeping/eating patterns

✚ Toddlers

- Grumpy/whiny
- Regress in behavior (bed-wetting, crawling)

✚ Cover these areas with care-givers or counselors at the preschool level. Also, helpful information for parents who may have younger children if they allow you to have a briefing at the school.

Reactions of Older Children (Grade School)

✱ Normal Reactions

- Copy adult reactions
- Withdraw or Act Out
 - Depends on child
- Sleep disturbance
- Worry about safety
- Blame caregiver
- Change in school performance

✱ Concerning Behaviors

- Any one of the normal reactions that become harmful, obsessive, or life changing.
- Hurting self or others.
 - Animals
- Grades drop to where they are not rebounding.

Reactions of Jr.High/High School

- ✱ Act like they do not care.
- ✱ Anger (out of normal)
- ✱ Challenge parents
- ✱ Over sensitive (never feel understood)
- ✱ Change in school performance
- ✱ Change in personality
- ✱ When to be concerned
 - When changes overtake normal life functioning



Reactions of children to disaster

- ✖ The event will happen again.
- ✖ Some will be injured or killed.
- ✖ Separation from family.
- ✖ They will be left alone.
- ✖ These reactions are not much different than adults. But, military families tend to have a heightened anxiety level.

Explain the uniqueness of the Guard

- ✦ Families are still “civilian” while members become active Guard.
- ✦ Your entire life stops, changes, and may not be the same.
- ✦ Children are not near base for support.
- ✦ Explain the military structure, rank, jobs, etc.

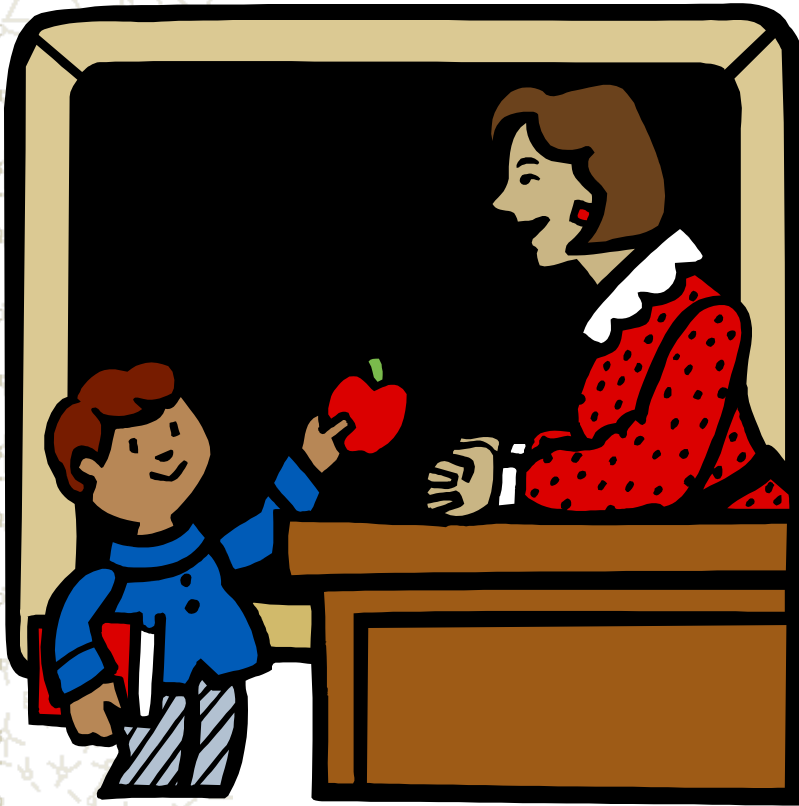




Counselors in summary

- ✦ Help them implement program for children to be supportive.
- ✦ Give them the information they need to be aware of the students in their school.
- ✦ Be a POC and reference for situations that may arise.
- ✦ Check in with them.

Educators



- ✦ Teachers can be a constant and supportive person in the life of a military child.
- ✦ Guide teachers
 - Helpful hints
 - What to watch for
 - Ideas for activities



Teachers In-Service Day

- ✦ Try to have a presentation for all the teachers.
- ✦ Share with them the same information you shared with the counselors.
- ✦ Discuss what things they are already experiencing in the classroom.
- ✦ Share helpful activities and ideas that can benefit all children in the classroom.

Teachers Helping Parents



- ✦ Military Child Education Coalition Handout
www.militarychild.org
- ✦ Inform parents about the importance of information sharing
 - When leaving
 - When returning
 - How Long
- ✦ Become a GREAT listener

Educators and Deployments



- ✱ First people that can notice behavior change.
- ✱ Encourage child to visit with you or school counselor.
- ✱ Be aware of how children handle “political” discussions.
 - Grade school (not appropriate)
 - Jr.High/High School?
- ✱ Can you contact the deployed parent before they return?

Lesson Plans

- ✚ Start a website that deployed parents can access when available. Let children post what they are learning and photos of school events.
- ✚ Teach geography
 - Where people are deployed (in general).
- ✚ Math
 - Miles to locations, travel times, transportation, currency.
- ✚ Social Studies
 - Culture, beliefs, etc.
- ✚ Civics
 - Start of the Guard, How America was founded, etc.

Reunion Issues



KISSING THE WAR GOODBYE
TIMES SQUARE, NEW YORK, 14 AUGUST 1945

- ✂ Teachers often see it like other do on the news
- ✂ Explain to them that reunion is often the most difficult time
- 🔊 See if the teacher can have any contact with the parent before hand
- ✂ Invite the returned parent to come speak to the class about their experiences

Summary for educators



- ✦ Watch for behaviors in children
- ✦ Use the deployment as a learning opportunity for all children
- ✦ Be respectful of sharing any information
- ✦ Keep line of communication open with parents



Students

- ✦ Encourage schools to start a student support activity for each grade level, or grouped by close ages.
- ✦ Counselors, teachers, and administration should all be properly trained to ensure an strong support network.
- ✦ Train a POC to operate a support group after you get one implemented.

Ideas and Guidelines for Group



- ✱ Meet once a week for 45 minutes.
- ✱ Plan time for activities and discussions that may arise as a result of the activity.
- ✱ Allow group members to be anyone with a family member deployed.
- ✱ Group by age level if numbers allow for it.
- ✱ Permission form signed by guardian

Activities

- ✦ Make ID cards for kids.
- ✦ Draw maps of countries that people deploy to.
- ✦ Deployment Jars.
- ✦ Calendar countdown.
- ✦ Topic discussion groups.
- ✦ Team building exercises





Points to remember

- ✦ Respect security issues and to much information sharing.
- ✦ Start these groups with a POC from the school with the intention that this person can run the groups with minimal support from you.
- ✦ Take care to make sure the activities are age appropriate.
- ✦ Encourage communication with the children's parents or guardian.



Questions??????????

Sources:

http://www.mfrc-dodqol.org/Enduring_Freedom/pdfs/working_with_military_children.pdf
www.militarychild.org
www.nea.org